

*Frank Stephens
Field Notes, 1920*

March 28 - April 1, 1920

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

March 28 1920

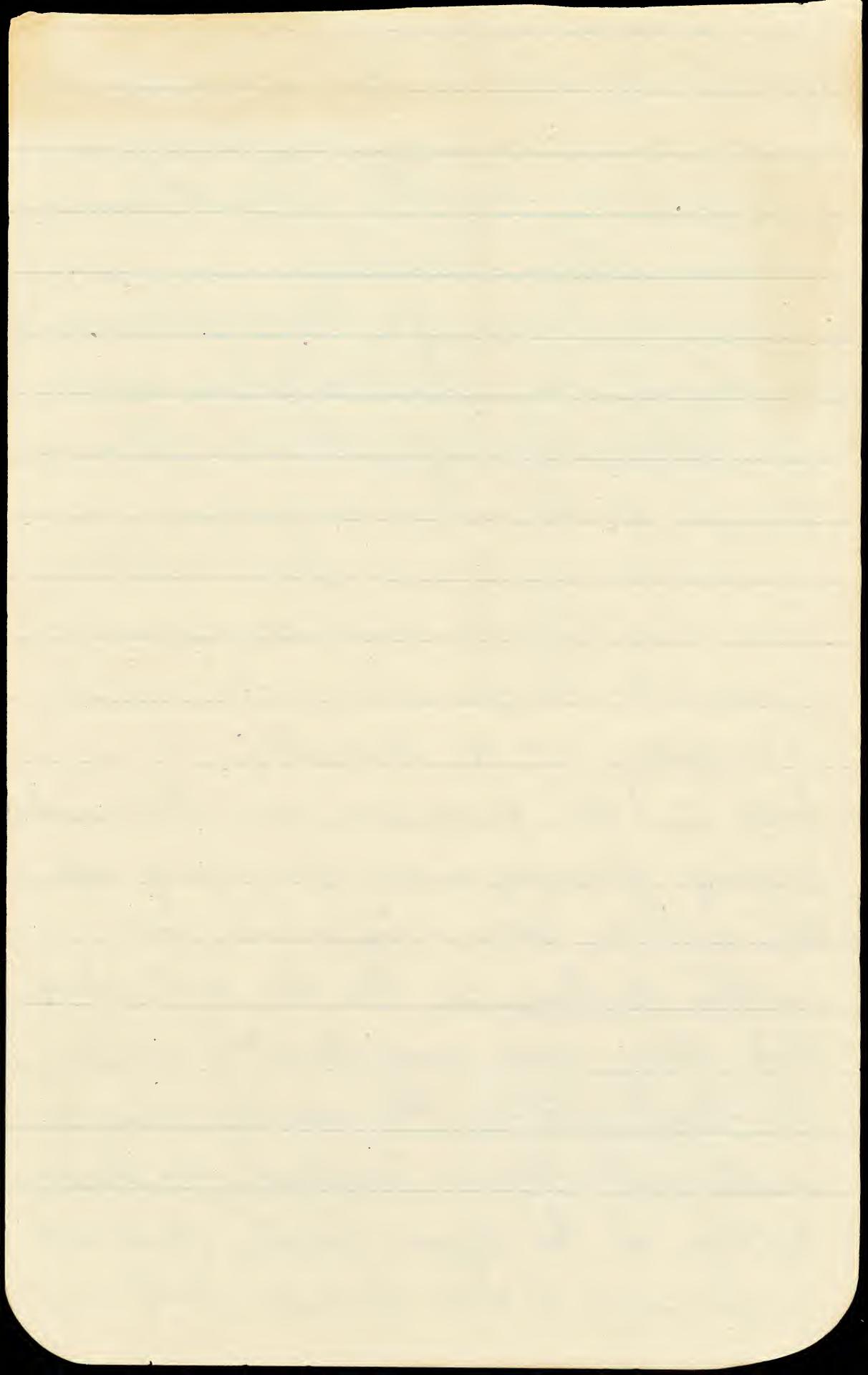
Saw a Scott Oriole
near La Plaza.

Saw a pair of Mountain
Dove in the upper end
of Blair Valley, near the
head of the box canon.

Saw very few butterflies
in the box canon as we
passed them about 4-5.

Monday 29th March.

Put in the forenoon on the work
drying flowers and cleaning up
the cabin. The vegetation was
rather backward tho the soil shows
that there was considerable rain
the last storm. The early rains
could not have reached La Plaza
Valley, as the Agave deserti had not
responded. I saw perhaps half a



stems beginning to grow - none high enough to show any flower buds, in fact I saw no flowers of this species anywhere on the trip. Birds were scarce, and most of those seen were Zonotrichia (law-
cophrys,?). In the afternoon we drove down to Vallecito. McCain and Campbell are making a new road down the Mason hill. The roof of the old house at Vallecito is fallen in, I watched for bats in the evening, but saw none, tho at this season I have previously found them abundant here. I found two Bohemian Waxwings near the water trough; they had apparently been killed with a .22 cal rifle some weeks previously. The flesh was not dried up, but was badly decomposed.

Tuesday March 30th,
Harry Gauthier found a nest with two
eggs on a bunch of mistletoe in
a mesquit tree a few yards from
our camp. He saw the bird fly
away and says it was a Cooper's
Hawk, which the eggs look like,
Phainopeplas are common, saw one
western robin. In the forenoon
we drove down to ~~Vallecito~~^{Barry's Creek},
stopping on the way to gather
flowers, which were in fine
condition below Vallecito, In the
afternoon John, George and I took
a bike into the clay hills
south of Barry's Creek, to look for
fossils. Found nothing but rock
oysters, except two or three fragments
of large oysters. Saw the rock
oysters in a number of places,
some weathered out on the
surface, and some in strata

composed of finely broken pieces,
John and George went up to the
summit of the ridge between
Canyon Valley and Coyote Hills
Valley. On the summit they
found a stratum of marble
that contained many *Pholad*
borings. The clay hills are
exceedingly rough. They are
the remains of an old plain
or mesa deeply cut by numerous
ravines. In most cases the
narrow ridges between the
ravines are worn to sharp
edges that one could sit
astride of. In a few places
there are remains of the old mesa.
This is thickly covered with
gravel and boulders. Many of
the boulders are of very hard
marble, & mottled and streaked
light and dark gray, and
often etched by the wind blown sand.

Wednesday, March 31st.

Clouds passed just over the summits of the mountains all day, indicating a storm on the other side. Until this morning we have found only gentle breezes. At sunrise the wind grew strong and blew hard all day. We drove to Imperial and El Centro in the forenoon, and to Coyote Wells and Mountain Spring in the afternoon, camping in a vacant house near the top of the grade. Men are working on the roads both above and below Mountain Spring, apparently getting ready to pave the grade. Have seen very few lizards and no snakes so far. On the desert above the main canal caterpillars were very abundant, they were feeding on various species of plants and

were very active. Near Dixieland they were attempting to crawl across the paved highway, but the strong wind rolled them back to the edge, when they were often so thick that one could not put a foot down without crushing one or more. Yesterday and the day before I saw many "Pointed Lady" butterflies (Pycramis) migrating north west. Today the wind was too strong to let them fly. Saw very few birds today. The plants on the desert were in fine condition, tho I have seen them a little better.

Thursday, April 1st,

Drove home, hot wind all noon and worked on how to get out. Got two Syrrhina erionotis at the spring north west of Jacumba.

Saw a few Thryothorus ludovicianus
and many Pyrasais. Flowers were
in good condition all the way.
The bird migration was not yet
over, way, tho' most of the winter
residents are gone, I have seen
no thrashers on this trip and but
few, perhaps half a dozen, cactus
wrens. As I did not take a gun
along I did no hunting. Saw some
rabbits, jacks, bush rabbits and
cottontails, ~~the~~ They were most
plentiful near Dulzura. The
late rains had put the sandy
roads in fine condition, so we
got thru nicely, being bothered
by the sand in only one place,
on Barrizo Creek, which held
us but a few minutes. There
has been very little travel on
the old Barrizo Creek road,
 lately.

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